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ABSTRACT

A study was carried out to examine self concept, level of externality, and attitudes toward physical characteristics, neighborhoods and schools of 98 black youths in predominantly white suburbs of the Pacific Northwest region. The method used was based on a conceptual framework of "ethnicity typology." The stages of this typology were defined as (1) ethnic psychological captivity, (2) ethnic encapsulation, (3) ethnic identity clarification, (4) biethnicity, (5) multiethnicity and reflective nationalism, and (6) globalism and global competency. It was found that there is little evidence to support the contention that blacks who attend white schools will internalize negative self images and accept white standards of beauty. Most blacks were found to have genuine ethnic pride and still interact well with whites and other ethnic groups. Further, young blacks were found to be likely to identify with global issues. Voluntary separatism was practiced by only a few youths who had negative beliefs of themselves. (WAM)

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A STUDY OF BLACK SUBURBAN YOUTHS: IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS FOR THE STAGES OF ETHNICITY TYPOLOGY*

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Introduction

In 1976, I became concerned because many educators and social scientists were assuming that ethnic groups were monolithic and had homogeneous needs and characteristics. Social scientists often asserted, for example, that Black youths had low self-concepts without describing the tremendous social class, cultural, and regional differences among Blacks and how these differences may influence self-concept among Black youths. Wilson's (19.8) controversial book, despite its limitations, did bring to the attention of the social science community the important social class variations among Blacks.

I became convinced that ethnic identity is one of the important ways in which individual members of ethnic groups differ by observing students and teachers from diverse ethnic groups. In 1976 (Banks, 1976; Banks, 1981), I developed a typology which attempts to describe the stages of ethnicity among individual members of ethnic groups. This typology is a preliminary ideal-type construct in the Weberian sense and constitutes a set of hypotheses which are based on the existing and emerging theory and research and on my observations of ethnic behavior. I developed this typology to stimulate research and the development of concepts and theory related to intraethnic diversity. Several researchers, including Ford (1979), have either completed studies or are in the process of conducting studies using this typology as a major conceptual framework.

In 1981, I was still interested in ethnic identity and the social class and cultural variations within ethnic groups. However, I was especially interested in the social, psychological, and educational experiences of Black youths who lived in predominantly White suburban communities. I felt that research on this population would contribute significantly to theories related to social class and cultural variations among Blacks and contribute, at least indirectly, to the development and/or modification of my stages of ethnicity

typology (Banks, 1981).

Purposes of This Paper

In this paper I will describe, in a highly abbreviated form, the stages of ethnicity typology, some of the major findings of my study of Black suburban youths (Note 1), and try to interpret some of the results of this study within the conceptual framework of the stages of ethnicity typology. This final venture will be highly exploratory and tentative. However, I think it is important for those of us who develop typologies and theories to occasionally attempt to see how they relate to data in the real world. Since the summaries of both the typology and the study in this paper are very brief, I suggest that interested scholars examine the sources in which the typology and the study are reported in considerable detail (Banks, 1981; Note 1).

The Stages of Ethnicity Typology

Stage 1: Ethnic Psychological Captivity: During this stage the individual inculcates the negative ideologies and beliefs about his/her ethnic group that are institutionalized within the society. Consequently, he/she exemplifies ethnic self-rejection and low self-esteem. The individual is ashamed of his/her ethnic identity during this stage and may respond in a number of ways, including avoiding situations that bring him/her into contact with other ethnic groups, or striving aggressively to become highly culturally assimilated.

Stage 2: Ethnic Encapsulation: Stage Two is characterized by ethnic encapsulation and ethnic exclusiveness, including voluntary separatism. The individual participates primarily within his/her own ethnic community and believes that his/her ethnic group is superior to that of others. Many individuals within Stage 2, such as many Anglo-Americans, have internalized

the dominant societal myths about the superiority of their ethnic or racial group and the innate inferiority of other ethnic groups and races.

Stage 3: Ethnic Identity Clarification: At this stage the individual is able to clarify his/her attitudes and ethnic identity, to reduce intrapsysic conflict, and to develop clarified positive attitudes toward his/her ethnic group. The individual learns to accept self, thus developing the characteristics needed to accept and respond more positively to outside ethnic groups. During this stage, ethnic pride is genuine rather than contrived.

State 4: Biethnicity: Individuals within this stage have a healthy sense of ethnic identity and the psychological characteristics and skills needed to participate successfully in his/her own ethnic culture as well as in another ethnic culture. The individual also has a strong desire to function effectively in two ethnic cultures. We may describe individuals within this stage as biethnic or bicultural.

State 5: Multiethnicity and Reflective Nationalism: The Stage 5 individual has clarified, reflective and positive personal, ethnic and national identifications, positive attitudes toward other ethnic and racial groups, and is self-actualized. The individual is able to function, at least beyond superficial levels, within several ethnic cultures within his or her nation, and to understand, appreciate, and share the values, symbols, and institutions of several ethnic cultures within his or her nation.

Individuals within this stage have a commitment to their ethnic groups, an empathy and concern for other ethnic groups, and a strong but reflective commitment and allegiance to the nation state and its idealized values, such as human dignity and justice.

State 6: Globalism and Global Competency: The individual within Stage 6 has clarified, reflective, and positive ethnic, national, and global

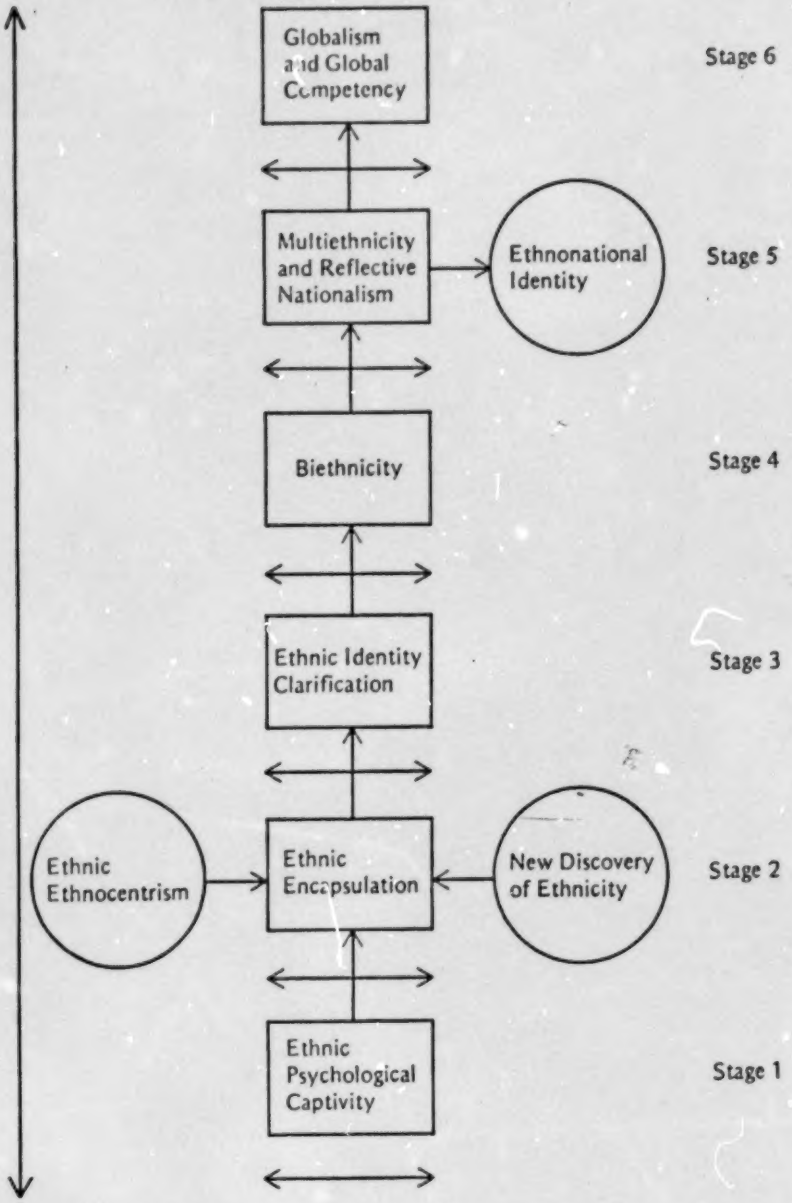

Figure 1 The Stages of Ethnicity: A Typology*

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identifications and the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and abilities needed to function within ethnic cultures within his or her own nation as well as within cultures outside his or her nation in other parts of the world. The Stage 6 individual has the ideal delicate balance of ethnic, national, and global identifications, commitments, literacy and behaviors.

Characteristics of the Stages of Ethnicity Typology

This typology is an ideal type construct and should be viewed as dynamic and multidimensional rather than as static and linear. The characteristics within the stages exist on a continuum. Thus, within Stage 1, individuals are more or less ethnically psychologically captive; some individuals are more ethnically psychologically captive than others.

The division between the stages is blurred rather than sharp. Thus a continuum also exists between as well as within the stages. The ethnically encapsulated individual (Stage 3) does not suddenly attain clarification and acceptance of his/her ethnic identify (Stage 4). This is a gradual and developmental process. Also, the stages should not be viewed as strictly sequential and linear. I am hypothesizing that some individuals may never experience a particular stage. However, I hypothesize that once an individual experiences a particular stage, he/she is likely to experience the stages above it sequentially and developmentally. I hypothesize, however, that individuals may experience the stages upward, downward, or in a zigzag pattern. Under certain conditions, for example, the biethnic (Stage 4) individual may become multiethnic (Stage 5); under new conditions the same individual may become again biethnic (Stage 4), ethnically identified (Stage 3), and ethnically encapsulated (Stage 2).

The Study of Black Suburban Youths

This study is part of a larger study of Black families who lived in selected, predominantly White suburban communities of a large metropolitan area in the Pacific Northwest, the population of which exceeds one million. The major purpose of the larger study was to describe family socialization practices related to the acquisition of racial attitudes and ethnic behavior. The present study was designed to describe the self-concepts of ability, general self-concepts, level of externality, and the attitudes toward physical characteristics, neighborhoods, and schools of the children in the larger study who were age 8 to 18. Data on these variables were collected from 98 youths who were members of 57 families that participated in the larger study.

The children were administered the following scales: the Brookover Self-Concept of Ability Scale (Note 2); the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965), the Stephan-Rosenfield (1979) Racial Attitude Scales, the Nowicki-Strickland (1973) Locus of Control Scale, and a 45-item questionnaire I developed with subscales that measure: Attitudes Toward School; Physical Self-Concept; Attitudes Toward Blacks; Attitudes Toward Whites; and Attitudes Toward Neighborhood. Two measures of ethnocentrism (pro-Blackness) were derived from the differences between the subjects' attitudes toward Whites mean scores and their attitudes toward Blacks mean scores on the Banks racial attitudes subscales and the Stephan-Rosenfield subscales.

The Major Findings and the Stages of Ethnicity

Stage 1 individuals have negative beliefs and attitudes toward their own ethnic group and have internalized the negative images of themselves that are perpetuated by the larger society. Black children who are socialized within a predominantly White suburban community, and who attend predominantly

White schools, such as the children in this study, may run the risk of internalizing the negative images of Blacks and the White standards of beauty that are institutionalized within most predominantly White communities. Previous research on children's racial attitudes suggests that this may be the case (Williams and Morland, 1976).

However, there is little evidence in this study that these children have internalized negative images toward Blackness, White standards of physical beauty, or negative racial attitudes toward Blacks as a group. The ten-item Physical Self-Concept subscale in this study was designed to measure how Black youths evaluated their physical characteristics and race and to determine how physical self-evaluation was related to other variables. These children evaluated their physical characteristics and Blackness positively. The mean physical-self score was 33.14, out of a possible score of 40 (SD = 3.51, n = 98). Over 90 percent of the children agreed with this statement: "I like the way I look;" 98 percent agreed with the statement, "I like the color of my skin." Only 8.2 percent of the children agreed with the statement: "My looks bother me."

Most of the children in this study had positive attitudes toward Blacks as a group. On the Stephan-Rosenfield scale (the lower the score on this scale, the more positive are the attitudes), the mean score on the Attitudes Toward Blacks subscale obtained by the children in this study was 22.86. In an earlier study conducted by Stephan and Rosenfield (1979), White students had a mean score on the Attitudes Toward Whites subscale of 23.1. The Black students in the present study were slightly more positive toward their racial group than the White students in the Stephan-Rosenfield study.

Stage 2 is characterized by ethnic encapsulation and ethnic exclusiveness, including voluntary separatism. Individuals within this stage also tend to evaluate their ethnic group much more positively than outside ethnic groups.

Given the sociocultural environment in which the children in this study were being socialized, it is not surprising that the results of this study indicate that they had few Stage 2 characteristics. Most of them had highly positive attitudes towards Blacks as well as toward Whites. They had very low ethnocentrism scores, when ethnocentrism was determined both by using means from the Banks and Stephan-Rosenfield subscales (Banks subscale: Ethnocentrism mean = 4.1; possible score = 32) (Stephan-Rosenfield subscale: Ethnocentrism mean = 3.32, possible score = 40).

At Stage 3, the individual is able to clarify his/her ethnic identity and to develop positive and clarified attitudes toward his/her ethnic group. At Stage 4, the individual has a healthy sense of ethnic identity, positive attitudes toward another ethnic group, and is able to participate successfully in his/her ethnic culture as well as in another ethnic culture. Individuals within this stage also have a strong desire to function effectively within two ethnic cultures.

The data in this study indicate that most of the children in this study have clarified ethnic identities (Stage 3) and are biethnic in their racial attitudes, perceptions and behavior (Stage 4). Responses to a number of the items in the questionnaire indicate that the children have positive racial attitudes toward both Blacks and Whites and that they enjoy interacting with both their Black and White friends, and wished that more Black children and teachers were in their environments.

On the Stephan-Rosenfield subscales, the mean score for attitudes toward Whites was 25.8; the mean score for attitudes toward Blacks was 22.86. On the Banks racial attitudes subscales, the mean scores for attitudes toward Whites was 22.20; the mean score for attitudes toward Blacks was 26.15. The findings from both sets of subscales indicate that the children were biracial in their racial attitudes, i.e., they had positive attitudes toward

both Blacks and Whites, although they had slightly more positive attitudes toward Blacks than toward Whites on both sets of scales.

Almost 98% of the children (97.9%) agreed with the statement: "I am proud to be Black." Most (88.8%) agreed with the statement, "I wish more Black students were at my school." Most (82.7%) agreed with the statement, "I wish more Black teachers were at my school;" 87.8% agreed with the statement "I wish more Black people lived in my neighborhood." Almost 89% (88.8%) of the children agreed with the statement: "I like to spend a lot of time with my Black friends;" 86.9% agreed with the statement; "I wish I had more Black friends."

The fact that most of the children in this study had highly positive attitudes toward Blacks did not cause them to have negative attitudes toward Whites. They also had highly positive attitudes toward Whites and indicated that they enjoyed their White friends. Most of the children (84.7%) disagreed with the statement: "I spend as little time with Whites as possible." A large majority of them (87.8%) agreed with the statement, "I get along well with other kids in my neighborhood." Most of the subjects not only had highly positive attitudes toward Whites and their White friends, but believed that their White friends and neighbors had positive attitudes toward them. Most agreed with these statements: "The kids in my neighborhood like to do things with me" (81.6%); and "The kids in my neighborhood think I am important" (63.3%). Most (74.5%) disagreed with the statement, "The kids in my neighborhood leave me out of things."

Almost 89 percent of the subjects (88.7%) disagreed with the statement, "The students at school leave me out of things;" 74.5% disagreed with the statement, "The teachers at school make me feel different." However, it is interesting to note that 25.5% of the students agreed with the statement that teachers make them feel different. This finding suggests that the

students may feel slightly more accepted by their peers than their teachers.

Most of the children in this study not only had highly positive attitudes toward Whites, but felt that their White peers and teachers treated them in a non-discriminatory way. However, while these statements accurately describe the responses of most of the children in this study, the reader should keep in mind that on each of the items discussed above, a percentage of the children responsed differently from most of the others. Since I am very concerned that researchers remain sensitive to intraethnic differences, I think it is important that we study closely the responses and profiles of segments of a population that respond differently than most other subjects. At some future time, I would like to carefully study the responses, for example, of the 25.5% of students who agreed with the statement, "The teachers at school make me feel different."

Some Questions Raised by Biethnicity(Biculturation)

While most of the findings in this study seem to give us reasons for hope and optimism about the experiences of Black children who are socialized within a predominantly White suburban community, several of them raise questions about individuals who function biculturally, especially when they are part of a small minority within a dominant or mainstream culture.

As previously stated, the children in this study had positive attitudes toward Blacks. However, age correlated negatively with attitudes toward Blacks when racial attitudes were measured with the Stephan-Rosenfield scale. This indicates that, for this population, older children had slightly more negative attitudes toward Blacks than younger children. There was a moderate but significant negative relationship between attitudes toward school and attitudes toward Blacks, when attitudes toward Blacks were measured with the Banks subscale. (This finding may be an artifact of the Banks scale which

included several questions related to attitudes toward Blacks in the school setting.) There was also a moderate but significant negative relationship between attitudes toward Blacks (Banks scale) and attitudes toward neighborhood. This indicates that the more the children liked their neighborhoods the more negatively they felt toward Blacks.

Stage 5 individuals have positive attitudes toward more than two ethnic groups and the skills and desire to function within them. Stage 6 individuals not only have positive attitudes toward a range of ethnic groups within the United States but also the kind of identity, attitudes, skills and abilities needed to function successfully within cultures outside of the United States. Unfortunately, my Black suburban study does not provide any data which shed light on these two stages since it was a study of Black children and their attitudes toward only one other ethnic cultural group: Anglo and/or Mainstream Americans.

Summary

In this brief paper, I have described my stages of ethnicity typology and attempted to interpret some of the major findings from my study of Black suburban youths within the context of the typology. The research findings suggest that few individuals who participated in the suburban study can be characterized as Stage 1 individuals since most of them had highly positive attitudes toward Blacks. Few also may be described as Stage 2 individuals since they had positive attitudes toward both Blacks and Whites and enjoyed their social contacts with both Black and White peers.

The data does suggest that most of the students in the suburban study can be characterized both as Stage 3 (Ethnically clarified) and Stage 4 (Bicultural) individuals. While these two stages are conceptually distinct, in reality individuals are likely to retain their Stage 3 (Ethnic clarification)

characteristics as they function biculturally (Stage 4). Individuals are also likely to remain ethnically clarified (Stage 3), bicultural (Stage 4), and multiethnic (Stage 5) as they function as Stage 6 (globalism). The suburban study suggests that individuals who function at Stages 3 through 6 will usually retain the characteristics obtained in each of the earlier stages as they acquire the characteristics of the next higher stage. While this is true of Stages 3 through 6, as individuals move from Stages 1 and 2 to Stage 3, they are likely to retain few of the characteristics of these first two stages. This is because Stages 1 and 2 differ substantially from Stages 3 through 6.

Some of the intercorrelations of the variables in the suburban study (such as the relationship between age and attitudes toward Blacks; attitudes toward Blacks and attitudes toward school; and attitudes toward Blacks and attitudes toward neighborhood) suggest that bicultural functioning may have some complex effects on the attitudes of individuals toward their own racial group, especially if they are part of a small minority group in the bicultural environment. These intercorrelations indicate that bicultural functioning is a complex phenomenon that merits further study and analysis.

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